

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING MELISSA FULTON

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Melissa Fulton to recognize her substantial contributions to our community through her remarkable career in the Lakeport Chamber of Commerce and her extensive service to Lake County.

Melissa was born and raised in Harvey, Illinois, but moved to Lakeport California with her husband John in 1989. That same year she joined the Lakeport Chamber of Commerce where she became an active volunteer. After a search committee recognized her impeccable leadership and ability, she was recruited to fulfill the positions of Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer for the Lakeport Chamber of Commerce. She has been serving in these positions for 27 years with only a brief break to serve as Advertising Director of the Lake County Record-Bee and the Clear Lake Observer-American newspapers.

Melissa holds a passion for selfless service as demonstrated through her leadership in her career and in multiple community groups. This includes serving on the Board of Directors of the Lake County Economic Development Corporation, the Lake County Rodeo Association, and the Lakeport Main Street Association. Additionally, Melissa was a past President of the Lakeport Rotary club, where she facilitated fundraising efforts to support the painting and restoration of the Library Park Gazebo.

Her invaluable contributions and achievements to the community include transforming the Lakeport Chamber of Commerce to the Lake County Chamber of Commerce, creating the annual Destination publication, designing and constructing the annual Lake County exhibits for the California State fair, and establishing the certified tourism Ambassador program in Lake County. Melissa has been described by colleagues and community members as a mentor, an instigator, and above all a Lake County treasure who will leave a legacy for herself as a passionate and determined advocate for Lake County.

Madam Speaker, Melissa Fulton's achievements will leave a tremendous impact in Lake County for generations to come. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor her here today.

IN HONOR OF PRETRIAL, PROBATION AND PAROLE WEEK 2021

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the Nation's community supervision professionals and the many vital

roles they play in their work with justice-involved adults and juveniles. They identify opportunities and services to help individuals successfully contribute to society, while, at the same time, holding them accountable for their actions. They remain always mindful of their role in ensuring public safety.

In honor of Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week 2021, we salute all of those who have chosen this important career. In the District of Columbia, we especially thank the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia and the Pretrial Services Agency for the District of Columbia for their service. These agencies are models of excellence in community supervision. Their work reflects the theme of Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week, "Restoring Trust, Creating Hope."

As was the case last year, community supervision officers have demonstrated great courage and resolve in continuing their work during the coronavirus pandemic. They have found innovative ways to remain connected with the individuals they supervise and to continue guiding them in the interest of safety.

Community supervision agencies are valuable partners of government agencies, nonprofits, neighborhood-based groups and all who strive to make our nation safer and stronger. We extend our gratitude to them and ask the House of Representatives to honor them and recognize their many achievements as we proclaim July 18–24, 2021, as Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week in Washington, D.C.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 215, YEA on Roll Call No. 216, and NAY on Roll Call 217.

HONORING ARMENIAN AMBASSADOR VARUZHAN NERSESYAN FOR HIS WORK STRENGTHENING THE U.S.-ARMENIA RELATIONSHIP

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor His Excellency Varuzhan Nersesyan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to the United States. After nearly three years of dedicated service, Ambassador Nersesyan and his family will soon embark across the Atlantic to

serve as Armenia's Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

As Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, I would like to thank the Ambassador for his partnership and willingness to work together to strengthen the U.S.-Armenia relationship and share issues of importance relating to Armenia and the greater South Caucasus region.

Over the past three decades, Armenia has faced three wars initiated by its neighbor, Azerbaijan, dual blockades by Turkey and Azerbaijan, the lingering impact of the devastating 1988 earthquake, energy shortages, an influx of Armenian refugees forcibly displaced from Azerbaijan, and periods of mass migration. Armenia has endured these challenges through the will of its people, who have strongly committed to democracy and the rule of law in contrast to many countries in the region. As a result, Armenia's last two parliamentary elections were free, fair, transparent, and accessible—a true testament to Armenia's democratic principles.

The Ambassador has been a strong proponent of this democratic push, helping to enhance vibrant and strong U.S.-Armenia relations by helping to bring the legislative branches of our countries closer together. My colleagues in Congress and I have warmly welcomed our parliamentary counterparts from Armenia in the U.S. Capitol. U.S. Congressional delegations have also been welcomed in Armenia, including a visit to Armenia involving Members of the House Democracy Partnership in 2019. We must continue this work of advancing our countries' mutual interests. The United States must continue rewarding innovative democracies and inclusive economies like Armenia. This is especially true in a region that is dominated by authoritarian regimes which have a tendency of perpetuating aggressions and attempting to stoke instability.

Ambassador Nersesyan also exemplified the great personal strength and resolve shown of all Armenians as the world witnessed the heartbreaking 44-day war in Artsakh perpetrated by Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Turkish-backed mercenaries in the fall of 2020. Armenians in Artsakh have shown the international community that their right to self-determination in their centuries-old homeland must be taken seriously and their voices have been amplified by exemplary Armenian diplomats like the Ambassador. I witnessed his tireless dedication to advocating on their behalf for their right to self-determination and know his many efforts have not gone unheard in the United States Congress or in the current Administration.

Ambassador Nersesyan's mission in Washington, D.C. is not his first experience in the United States. His deep knowledge of our country and commitment to diplomacy was evident when he served as Armenia's Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Armenia from 2008 and 2012. During that time, he also matriculated and graduated from my alma mater—the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University—where he earned a Global Master of Arts.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

During his time here, the Ambassador and his team have also done a wonderful job at showcasing Armenia's vibrant culture and history through many educational and artistic events in our nation's capital such as An Armenian Odyssey in early March 2020.

Once again, I take this opportunity to salute Ambassador Nersesyan on his mission here in the United States. He has truly served in the United States with distinction and humility and has succeeded in strengthening U.S.-Armenia relations. I would like to bid him and his family farewell with the hope that he will continue to shine a bright light on behalf of his country in future diplomatic assignments.

PFAS ACTION ACT OF 2021

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 21, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2467, the "PFAS Action Act of 2021", which is comprehensive legislation to regulate Per- and poly- fluoroalkyl substances ("PFAS") chemicals, clean up contamination, and protect public health.

H.R. 2467 will provide the protections impacted communities need quickly and for the long term.

Specifically, this bill will require Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to use tools under several environmental statutes to:

Stem the flow of PFAS contamination into the environment by requiring cleanup of contamination sites, setting air emission limits, prohibiting unsafe incineration of PFAS, and limiting the introduction of new PFAS chemicals into commerce;

Identify health risks by requiring comprehensive health testing for all PFAS, reporting of PFAS releases, and monitoring for PFAS in drinking water;

Inform communities of PFAS risks by requiring the EPA Administrator to develop a risk-communication strategy and establish a website with information on testing of household well water; and

Limit human exposure to PFAS by requiring a drinking water standard for PFAS that protects public health, including the health of vulnerable subpopulations like pregnant women, infants, and children, and holding polluters accountable.

The legislation also provides grants to impacted water systems, creates a voluntary label for cookware that is PFAS free, provides guidance for first responders to limit their exposures, and requires effluent limitations and pretreatment standards for PFAS introduction or discharge.

Known as PFAS, for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, the chemicals in this class of approximately 5,000 substances have become notorious as much for their potential danger as for their perseverance.

Because the chemical bonds that hold the compounds together don't break down easily, they last a very long time—a reality that has led to a commonly used name for the group: "Forever chemicals."

PFAS compounds are also ubiquitous and used in a range of products from food-delivery boxes to nonstick cookware to stain-resistant clothing.

But one of the most troubling routes to PFAS exposure is drinking water that has been contaminated by discharges from factories and other facilities.

PFAS chemicals are an urgent public health threat, because they are persistent, bio-accumulative, and toxic.

PFAS have long been linked with adverse health effects including cancer, immune system effects, infertility, impaired child development, high cholesterol, and thyroid disease.

PFAS have been detected in the drinking water of more than 1,400 communities in 49 states, according to research by the PFAS Project at Northeastern University in Boston and the Environmental Working Group (EWG).

According to monitoring by the EPA, millions of Americans are exposed to unsafe levels of PFAS through their drinking water.

Military families and communities are at especially high risk.

A 2018 UCS analysis of 131 U.S. military facilities showed that nearly all had significant PFAS contamination of groundwater or drinking water, some with levels over 100,000 times the safe limit as determined by the most recent draft scientific assessment from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Included in this analysis was the Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base in Houston, Texas, which tested at levels of 61,000 parts per trillion.

Clear and swift action from Congress is needed to address the PFAS crisis, and we need an all-hands-on-deck effort to protect both human health and our environment.

This bipartisan legislation will ensure we're treating PFAS as a hazardous chemical and giving our agencies the resources to clean up sites for the betterment of our communities.

I urge all members to join me in voting for H.R. 2467, the "PFAS Action Act of 2021."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. BRADY. Madam Speaker, I was unexpectedly withheld.

Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 211, and NAY on Roll Call No. 217.

HONORING DAVIE PINA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Davie Pina as the Napa County Farm Bureau's 2021 Agriculturalist of the Year.

A sixth generation Napa Valley farmer, Davie holds a strong and deep connection to the community. He attended high school locally at St. Helena High School and went on to attend college at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Davie became an assistant winemaker at Rutherford Hill Winery from 1973 to 1980. After seven years of extensive contributions toward the company, Davie joined John Pina

Jr. & Sons Vineyard Management, where he continued to broaden his knowledge of viticulture. Finally, in 1991, Davie became a managing partner at Pina Vineyard Management, where he has worked ever since.

Along with his demonstrated work ethic and commitment to agriculture, Davie has a rich history of civic engagement and service to the surrounding community. He served on the Board of Directors and as president of the Rutherford Dust Society, a group of community members committed to promoting the highest standards possible for grape-growing and acting as good stewards to the land on which they grow grapes. Davie has also served on the Board of Directors and as president of the Winegrowers of Napa County, and on the Board of Directors for the local Farm Bureau and the Rutherford Grange.

In 1998, he became chair of the Rutherford Dust River Restoration team, which led efforts to restore the Napa River. In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the community, in 2007, Davie was recognized by the Napa Valley Grapegrowers as Grower of the Year. As part of his mission to assist his community, Davie has served with the Rutherford Volunteer Fire Department since 1987 and was its chief from 2012 to 2021. In recognition of his tremendous leadership to the department, he was recognized as the 2013 Fire Fighter of the Year. Davie has continuously pioneered innovative ways to approach sustainable agriculture in Napa Valley and is known throughout Napa as someone committed to sustainability and community service in all realms.

Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that Davie Pina's achievements will leave a tremendous impact on Napa Valley for generations to come. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GLENN THOMPSON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I was not present for the vote on the Motion to Recommit H.R. 2668 during the second vote series on Tuesday, July 20, 2021. If I were present, I would have voted YES on the Motion to Recommit H.R. 2668, the Consumer Protection and Recovery Act.

CONSUMER PROTECTION AND RECOVERY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2668, the "Consumer Protection and Recovery Act", which will ensure that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) can protect American consumers and put money back in the pockets of consumers who have been the victims of fraud and other scams by amending the Federal Trade Commission Act (FTC Act) to explicitly provide the FTC the ability to obtain both injunctive and

monetary equitable relief for all violations of the laws it enforces.

Specifically, this bill would:

Add a new subsection (e) to section 13 of the FTC Act that specifies types of equitable relief the FTC may pursue: restitution for losses, contract reformation and rescission, money refunds, and the return of property;

Provide the FTC disgorgement authority to seek court orders requiring bad actors repay unjust gains acquired in violation of the law.

Clarify that the FTC may seek temporary restraining orders and preliminary injunctions without bond and that any relief sought under section 13(b) may be for past violations in addition to ongoing and imminent violations.

As the Nation's premier consumer protection agency, the FTC is directed to enforce numerous statutes: the core of which is section 5 of the FTC Act mandating the agency to prevent unfair or deceptive acts or practices and unfair methods of competition.

Section 13(b) of the FTC Act authorizes the FTC to bring suit in federal courts seeking relief for consumers and is a critical enforcement tool the FTC uses to combat fraud and scams under section 5.

In 2020 alone, the FTC returned more than \$482 million to over 1.6 million consumer victims of fraud or illegal business practices.

The FTC's restitution authority under section 13(b) was settled law for over 40 years, but beginning in 2017, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals reversed its own precedent to overturn FTC authority under section 13(b) to obtain monetary relief and the Third Circuit soon followed.

Because of these decisions, close to 48 million Americans in six states became unable to obtain monetary redress under 13(b).

Then, on April 22, 2021, the Supreme Court held in *AMG Capital Management v. FTC* that section 13(b) does not allow the FTC to seek monetary relief or require bad actors to return money earned through illegal activity.

According to Acting Chairwoman Slaughter, the Supreme Court decision "deprived the FTC of the strongest tool [the FTC] had to help consumers."

Mr. Speaker, all five FTC Commissioners have repeatedly urged Congress to take quick action to pass legislation reaffirming FTC authority under section 13(b).

H.R. 2668 does exactly that, by restoring nearly forty years of precedent and giving the FTC the ability to protect Americans from scams and unethical business practices.

Americans need this protection, because every day, and far too often, individuals in Texas and across the country fall victim to financial scammers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to an increase of scams and fraud that prey on consumers' fears and financial insecurities, and inaction on this issue is not an option as it will only embolden bad actors.

H.R. 2668 will ensure that the FTC maintains its ability to return money to the victims of scams.

Seniors especially need this protection, because they have worked their entire lives with the promise of a safe and secure retirement, but scammers and unscrupulous businesses are taking advantage of uncertainty surrounding the pandemic and working overtime to target them.

Retirement accounts are not the only damage these scams cause—they damage the independence and trust of a vulnerable community.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen instances of fraud rise in unprecedented numbers, as scammers attempt to take advantage of senior citizens and deprive them of their hard-earned savings.

Bad actors preying on older Americans is, unfortunately, nothing new, but in the midst of a global pandemic impacting Americans' lives and livelihoods, cracking down on those scams must be a priority.

One such scam was thwarted by Houston police and the Harris County District Attorney, who made an arrest in February in an international cyber-scam that bilked unsuspecting, mostly elderly victims out of more than \$1 million.

One victim of the scam, Asuncion Peppers, 74, a retired medical technician knows that first hand; She was bilked out of her life savings.

Hackers contacted Ms. Peppers on Facebook, pretending to be one of her Facebook friends.

She was told she was eligible for a government grant of almost one million dollars and all she had to do was send a check to pay taxes.

Investigators believe the scammers were operating from Nigeria, defrauding senior citizens in the U.S. and around the world.

Before Ms. Peppers realized she was being conned, she sent checks totaling \$87,000 hard-earned money.

She said that she worked three jobs to build her life savings.

Ms. Peppers and her husband are just two of 38 victims bilked out of more than \$1.3 million before the fraud was discovered.

This story is not an isolated incident: although 1 in 20 seniors in the U.S. is a target of fraud schemes, the National Adult Protective Services Association has found that only 1 in 44 seniors report that they are victims of a fraud scheme.

During these unprecedented times, it is imperative that Congress pass legislation that protects U.S. consumers and honest businesses from wrongdoers who steal money through fraud and deception.

Mr. Speaker, we need to strengthen federal prevention efforts and ensure leaders in the public and private sectors are collaborating on effective safeguards.

This begins with ensuring that the FTC has the explicit authority to obtain both injunctive and monetary relief for all violations of the laws it enforces.

I urge all members to join me in voting to pass H.R. 2668, the "Consumer Protection and Recovery Act."

TRIBUTE TO ZAHRA SOMANI KARAMALI

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and profoundly thank a long

time, super-star member of my staff, Zahra Somani Karamali. After serving in my district offices for thirteen years, Zahra is moving on to pursue a Ph.D. in Psychology and a career as a School Psychologist. It is hard for me to even imagine not having Zahra serving the residents of the 9th Congressional District as one of the most effective Constituent Advocates in the country. Though not in my office, she will always be a beloved member of Team Schakowsky.

Zahra Somani Karamali joined my office in 2008, and she brought perspective, experience, and enthusiasm that have left a permanent impact on our operations and on constituents' lives. She is a dedicated public servant who readily established herself as a strong ally for individuals who would otherwise not have an effective voice. My husband and I had the joy of attending her wedding to Nauman and celebrating the birth and growth of their two wonderful children Ayman and Zayna. She and her family have become cherished friends.

Over the years, Zahra advocated for thousands of constituents who needed help with a wide range of issues. She cut through red tape and solved difficult problems, often in life-changing ways.

Zahra helped immigrant families who were pursuing green cards or struggling to obtain a visa to travel home to visit sick relatives. She helped reunite families, assisted refugees, and helped immigrants obtain naturalization status. She expedited passport applications so that mothers and fathers didn't miss their daughters' wedding abroad. When residents called because they had missing mail or delayed tax returns, Zahra provided an empathetic ear and an enthusiastic hand to help solve those issues. During the pandemic she helped constituents who were stranded abroad and helped constituents obtain desperately needed stimulus checks and important benefits. She fought for constituents to receive all the benefits they needed and deserved and tackled problems big and small with compassion and professionalism.

Zahra is active in the Ismaili community and played an instrumental role in building and strengthening my and my office's relationships with the Muslim community. I am proud to have stood alongside her and so many others in that community in good times and in bad, and I deeply cherish the relationships I've formed along the way.

Zahra is always enthusiastic and willing to do whatever needs to be done. She represented me at office hours in libraries across the northwest suburbs, helped organize and conduct a wide array of events, and spoke on my behalf at events across the district.

Zahra has been an essential member of the team, and a big reason why my office is well known for its effective constituent services. I will miss Zahra very much, as will everyone on the staff. I expect to hear from many constituents who will be very disappointed to hear that Zahra is no longer there to help. We pledge to her that we will all work hard to fill the gap. I know that the fortunate students and families she will serve in the years ahead will benefit from the wonderful gifts that have made Zahra so invaluable to me.

HONORING WENDY BALDO

HON. ANDY BIGGS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of a longtime friend, Wendy Baldo, who will soon begin her well-deserved retirement.

Wendy first came to work in Arizona state government in 1988, during the administration of Governor Rose Mofford. In 1993, she began her long and distinguished career with the Arizona State Senate. In 2009, Wendy was hired as chief of staff for the legislative body, a role in which she has now served for more than 12 years.

I came to know Wendy while serving in the Arizona state legislature from 2002 to 2016. My election to the Arizona Senate in 2010 provided me the opportunity to work under Wendy's guidance, and she continued to serve as my chief of staff for the four years I served as Arizona Senate President. Wendy was always a trusted advisor. She staunchly protected the institution of the Senate and was the fierce, loyal ally every leader needs. It is a rare occurrence in the Arizona Senate for a chief of staff to serve multiple Senate presidents. Wendy's service to five presidents is a true testament to her character and caliber.

The knowledge and expertise Wendy has accumulated in her years in the Arizona Senate are an invaluable resource. Her retirement, while well-deserved, will undoubtedly be a loss for the Senate. I thank Wendy for her many years of service to the people of Arizona and wish her well in this next phase of her life.

REMEMBERING HARRY M. ROSENFELD

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer the thanks of a grateful nation for the life and work of former Washington Post Metro editor Harry M. Rosenfeld who guided the newspaper in its Pulitzer Prize-winning Watergate coverage. Mr. Rosenfeld died last week at the age of 91. A survivor of Berlin's Kristallnacht in 1938, he and his family immigrated to New York City in March of 1939, just months before World War II began. After graduating from Syracuse University and a stint in the U.S. Army, Mr. Rosenfeld joined the New York Herald Tribune syndicate and rose to managing editor before joining The Post. Editor Ben Bradlee made him assistant managing editor for metropolitan news where he inherited a staff of hungry reporters covering local beats, among them Carl Bernstein. Mr. Rosenfeld later hired a very persistent Bob Woodward. The double-byline stories of Woodward and Bernstein, covering scandal and corruption in the Nixon administration, eventually led to Nixon's 1974 resignation. He ended his career as the editor of newspapers in Albany, New York. I offer my condolences to his wife Anne and his three daughters and his extended family. Mr. Rosenfeld's enduring sense of justice and demand for accountability helped change American history and inspired

a generation of journalists. His passion for the truth and for journalism was an inspiration and a model to be emulated. His was a life well led.

SUCCESS ACT

HON. GRACE MENG

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Ms. MENG. Madam Speaker, during the COVID-19 crisis, we have seen how crucial internet access has been for learning and completing assignments. The homework gap, experienced by as many as 17 million students in the U.S. who do not have internet access at home, is an inequity that predates the coronavirus pandemic.

When I first began talking about this issue, I was shocked and saddened to recognize there were so many misconceptions about who was part of the homework gap. So many of my colleagues believed the homework gap is something that predominantly affects students in rural America. But in fact, one in five school-age children in NYC's public school system—the largest public school system in the country—do not have internet access at home.

The nature of homework assignments has fundamentally changed. Before, all you needed was a pencil and paper. But that is no longer the norm. Internet access is essential to completing homework assignments. It broke my heart to hear stories of families parked outside McDonalds or Starbucks trying to catch a free Wi-Fi signal.

Closing the homework gap extends beyond just helping our students finish their homework. Internet connectivity is essential to success in the 21st century; much like electricity was important in the 1930s, internet will be the same, if not more.

That is why Congress passed the Emergency Educational Connections Act as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, a bill that I proudly championed with Senator MARKKEY. This provision created the Emergency Connectivity Fund, and provided a one-time \$7.17 billion appropriation to connect students and library patrons learning at home.

As our Nation works to move past the pandemic, we must finally close the full homework gap that predates the ongoing emergency. That is why I am proud to introduce today the Securing Universal Communications Connectivity to Ensure Students Succeed or the SUCCESS Act. This bill would provide \$8 billion a year over five years (for a total of \$40 billion) to extend the FCC's Emergency Connectivity Fund, without an emergency time frame, so that schools and libraries can continue supporting distance learning after the coronavirus pandemic is over. This extended program will then ensure that students connected by the emergency connectivity fund do not lose their internet access and devices once the original funds run dry.

Madam Speaker, as the mother of two young children, I know firsthand how crucial this issue is. Each and every student must have the tools they need to succeed in school, and the SUCCESS Act is an essential component to permanently closing the homework gap. I urge all of my colleagues in both chambers to help close this digital divide for good.

SERIOUS ISSUES FACING OUR COUNTRY

SPEECH OF

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 21, 2021

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I'm here to point out just how interconnected the climate emergency is to America's housing crisis and how it impacts communities of color.

We are living in a climate emergency. Wildfires are raging, sea levels are rising, and severe weather events are getting stronger. Meanwhile homes are being destroyed, and not nearly enough is being done to address environmental racism and the ways in which communities of color across this country suffer disproportionately from a lack of action. We cannot stand by as corporations, big oil, and industry titans pollute the air we breathe and contaminate the water we drink without consequence.

The truth is that these negative environmental factors compound social and economic conditions, and lead to higher levels of chronic health problems such as asthma, diabetes, and hypertension in communities of color and low-income communities. It should surprise no one that on average, people of color comprise 56 percent of the population living in neighborhoods with facilities that release toxic substances into the air and water supply.

This is a fair housing issue and a direct result of systemic racism and historically racist policies, including redlining and exclusionary zoning, that segregate low-income people and people of color into areas that have suffered from decades of disinvestment. These segregated areas are often located closer to industrial districts and are therefore more likely to be deprived of green spaces, healthy homes, and clean drinking water. None of this is news. But, because of worsening residential segregation, the increasingly harmful effects of climate change and extreme weather events are exacerbating these conditions in low-income communities and communities of color.

Today, formerly redlined communities suffer from hotter temperatures, and their homes are 25 percent more likely to experience damage due to flooding compared to communities that were not redlined. In some cases, whether due to repeated flooding or because they are located at higher elevations, low-income communities of color, such as in Puerto Rico and Florida, are facing displacement, known as climate gentrification.

The real-life examples are far too plenty. Take for example, St. James Parish, Louisiana—a community that is often referred to as "Cancer Alley." I traveled there in 2001 to bring international attention to corporate pollution and the human costs of that pollution on communities of color. St. James Parish has a long history of inequality. The parish is located along the lower Mississippi River where enslaved Africans were forced to labor. Today, it serves as an industrial hub, with nearly 150 oil refineries, plastics plants, and chemical facilities. Not only have these facilities polluted the surrounding water and air, but they have also subjected the mostly African American residents of St. James Parish to cancer, respiratory diseases, and other health problems.

In 2005, we saw how Hurricane Katrina impacted people of color in New Orleans. Lives

were taken, whole communities were absolutely ravaged, and homes were destroyed. Even after seeing that level of destruction, not enough action has been taken to make sure that homes are resilient and safe from extreme weather events, especially those located in the hardest hit communities.

And just last year, in the middle of the pandemic, Georgia and Tennessee experienced deadly tornados that damaged and demolished more than 2,000 homes. In the wake of California's 2018 wildfires—the deadliest in the state's history—82 percent of homes that were built to pre-2008 standards were damaged. The need to ensure our homes and communities are sited and built more equitably and resiliently is more critical than ever before.

And so, I want to make it clear that America's housing infrastructure is vulnerable to the growing costs of climate change and weather disasters, which will only accelerate the need for maintenance and repair, or it will make our housing infrastructure uninhabitable. Between 2016 and 2020, these disasters have cost nearly \$616 billion in damages and have displaced tens of thousands of people from their homes. We cannot keep asking people to live like this. We must act now.

As Chairwoman of the House Committee on Financial Services, I recently introduced my historic Housing Is Infrastructure Act of 2021, which provides over \$600 billion to increase our nation's green, inclusive, affordable housing infrastructure. I'm fighting for the type of investments that will bring our housing stock into the 21st century and beyond, including working to address environmental racism and the climate emergency, strengthening our nation's commitment to fair housing, and recognizing that housing is infrastructure.

HONORING DIANE DILLON

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Diane Dillon as the recipient of the Napa County Farm Bureau's 2021 Friend of Agriculture for her ongoing work in serving Napa Valley's agricultural community.

As a fifth-generation Napa County resident, Diane has been an active community member for as long as she can remember. A UC Santa Barbara alumna, she graduated with a B.A. in Cultural Anthropology with Honors then continued her education at UCLA where she received her master's in library and information science. Diane went on to receive her J.D. from UC Davis in 1981 where she was a member of numerous school organizations. Since 2003, Diane has been serving on the Napa County Board of Supervisors as District 3 representative. As a Supervisor, Diane has made it a mission to better understand the intricacies of the state budget and finance system. To that end, she was asked to serve on the statewide Cities Counties Schools (CCS) Partnership 2009 Joint Task Force on Fiscal Reform. In January 2010, Diane held the first ever county-wide conference involving the county, municipalities, and school representatives.

Throughout her career, Diane has tirelessly worked with the agricultural community to un-

derstand and address the complex issues they face. As a co-organizer and member of "Get a Grip on Growth," she helped protect a 900+ acre piece of land from becoming developed into a commercial building area. Furthermore, Diane was co-chair on the "No on W & X Committee" where she received the Outstanding Service Award from United Napa Valley Associates for her resolute work. Diane is regarded as a passionate and dedicated member of the community and is recognized for her hard work to protect the scenic resources and beautiful lands of Napa County's agricultural industry. She is an excellent example of what it means to be a hard-working elected representative and a role model to many in leadership and the agricultural sector.

Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that Diane Dillon's achievements will leave a tremendous impact in our community for generations to come. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor her here today.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF ROBERT "RENNY" CUSHING

HON. JAMIE RASKIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Robert "Renny" Cushing, who has led a remarkable life dedicated to social activism and public service. His selfless determination to secure equitable social change for the communities he has served is a true testament to our country's civic spirit.

His journey began at the young age of 15 while advocating alongside civil rights activist Allard Lowenstein to end the Vietnam War and to lower the voting age nationwide. A year later, he left Hampton, New Hampshire with only \$40 in his pocket and an itch to see the world. Renny soon traveled thousands of miles and worked numerous blue-collar jobs. He picked oranges in Florida, plucked grapes in the San Joaquin Valley of California, collected waste in Atlanta and harvested tobacco in Mexico. After a few years of travelling, he decided to bring all the knowledge he acquired about people and life back home.

When he returned to Hampton, Renny co-founded the Clamshell Alliance, a group that would protest the construction of a nuclear station that individuals and families throughout his community voted against. He also later co-founded the Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights, an international non-government organization of family members of murder victims fearlessly dedicated to opposing the death penalty. Renny, whose father was tragically murdered, spent decades advocating for the abolishment of New Hampshire's death penalty law, which the state did repeal in 2019.

He officially began his career as a legislator in 1986, after winning his first election as a Representative of the New Hampshire State House. Following multiple non-consecutive terms, Renny was nominated as the Democratic Leader of the New Hampshire State House of Representatives in 2020. While serving as the Democratic Leader, Renny received a heartbreaking stage four prostate cancer diagnosis after he was hospitalized with acute kidney failure.

Renny did not allow this devastating news to deter his commitment to serving others. Now the Democratic Minority Leader, Renny continues to serve in the New Hampshire State House where he has fought to ensure remote access to House hearings for disabled legislators, expand availability of medical marijuana for cancer patients and ensure the removal of harmful PFAS chemicals in nearby wells.

Renny has devoted his life to the betterment of our nation and our communities and the uplifting of all our people. His unwavering commitment and tenacious attitude even in the toughest of times exemplify what it means to be a patriotic American.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to recognize the important accomplishments of Robert "Renny" Cushing, and I hope this Chamber will join me in celebrating his remarkable life and career.

HONORING JAMES W. FLINT

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend and a champion of the LGBTQ+ community, James W. Flint, on his 80th birthday.

At just 17, Jim enlisted in the Navy. He quickly became an accomplished service member before returning home to Illinois. Since the early 1960s, Jim has been the lifeblood of Chicago's LGBTQ+ community, dedicating his time, resources, and talents to expanding and creating the LGBTQ+ nightlife scene. For over 60 years, Jim has been a trailblazer and inspiration to many across the state of Illinois and beyond, and has been a committed activist and business leader.

He started his career as a bartender and quickly became the entrepreneur we know and love by opening his first locale, the Baton Show Lounge, in downtown Chicago. It was a first of its kind drag bar, featuring drag queen entertainers before these kinds of shows became as popular as they are today. In the decades since, Jim has owned many fabulous establishments, including Annex 2, Annex 3, Redoubt, Redoubt Atlanta, and River North Travel, in addition to the Baton Show Lounge, which is still open today and was recently relocated to my very own 9th Congressional district.

In addition to his extraordinary bars, in 1980, Jim founded the Miss Gay Continental Pageant, a national level drag showcase. He was motivated to start the pageant when he learned that many other pageants were discriminating against drag performers we would today identify as transgender. At that time, many of the pageants created rules and barriers that excluded entertainers that were living as women or who had any kind of plastic surgery. Today, now known as the Miss Continental Pageant, it has expanded to a pageant system that celebrates male and female entertainers from all across the country and around the world, and occurs in Chicago annually.

He was also a co-founder of the Windy City Athletic Association, which gave LGBTQ+ Chicagoans the opportunity to compete in amateur athletics with their counterparts from all across the nation.

Jim's deep community roots quickly positioned him as an activist and community organizer. In 1986 he ran for the Cook County Board of Commissioners, and although his bid was not successful, it was groundbreaking as he was one of the first openly gay people to run for public office in Illinois.

As is the case for all trailblazers, Jim has faced and overcome significant challenges in his personal and professional life. From witnessing rampant domestic violence, drug abuse, and homicide within the LGBTQ community to the many lives we lost to the AIDS epidemic in Chicago and across the country, Jim has withstood phenomenal pain.

Throughout times of unthinkable tragedy, Jim's warm energy and generous spirit have never wavered. His drive, compassion, and fantastic flamboyance are remarkable and have allowed him to be incredibly successful. He has played a tremendous role in shaping the LGBTQ community around the country, and his impact on the City of Chicago is immeasurable. As a businessman in the LGBTQ and Chicago community, he has blazed trails and opened doors for so many others.

And as a public servant, activist and community leader, he has made sure that the needs of the LGBTQ community were not ignored by our government. I am honored to call Jim a friend and wish him all the best and continued success.

TRIBUTE TO YOUNG STAFF MEMBERS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF THE 18TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF TEXAS AND THE UNITED STATES

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, in these tumultuous days of crisis and challenge, Members of Congress know well, perhaps better than most, how blessed our nation is to have in reserve such exceptional young men and women who will go on to become leaders in their local communities, states, and the nation in the areas of business, education, law, government, philanthropy, the arts and culture, and the military.

We know this because we see them and benefit from their contributions every day. Many of them work for us in our offices as junior staff members, congressional fellows, or interns and they do amazing work for and on behalf of the constituents we are privileged to represent.

Madam Speaker, I believe there is no higher calling than the call to serve a cause larger than ourselves. That is why I ran for public office. I was inspired to serve by President Kennedy who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," and by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said:

"Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. . . . You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

By this measure, there are several other great young men and women who served as

volunteers this year in my offices. They braved the dangers of the pandemic that has wrought so much suffering and heartbreak across our nation. They cheerfully do their duty in the U.S. Capitol complex that just six months ago was the site of an insurrection attack not seen since the War of 1812. These dedicated and public-spirited men and women may toil in obscurity but their contributions to the constituents we serve are deeply appreciated. That is why today I rise to pay tribute to five extraordinary young persons for their service to my constituents in the 18th Congressional District of Texas and to the American people. They are:

Alejandro Garcia Escobar Plascencia, Georgetown University;

Jacqueline White Menchaca, Arizona State University;

Idia Irele, Smith College and Harvard University;

Anthony Collier, Texas Southern University; and

Valencia Shuler, Rice University.

Madam Speaker, the energy, intelligence, and idealism these wonderful young people brought to my office and those interning in the offices of my colleagues help keep our democracy vibrant. The insights, skills, and knowledge of the governmental process they gain from their experiences will last a lifetime and prove invaluable to them as they go about making their mark in this world.

Because of persons like them the future of our country is bright, and its best days lie ahead. I wish them all well.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful that such thoughtful committed young men and women can be found working in my office, those of my colleagues, and in every community in America. Their good works will keep America great, good, and forever young.